



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**HB 16 – Crimes - Unattended Dogs - Extreme Weather Conditions and Heat**

**JANUARY 13, 2022**

**SUPPORT**

MEMBERS OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE, I WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY BRING BACK TO YOU LEGISLATION THAT REQUIRES ADEQUATE SHELTER FOR DOGS LEFT OUTDOORS IN EXTREME TEMPERATURES AND DURING AN ACTIVE STORM OR OTHER WARNING ISSUED BY THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE.

**WHY DO WE NEED HB 16?** DOGS LEFT UNATTENDED OUTDOORS IN EXTREME WEATHER AND WITHOUT ACCESS TO PROPER SHELTER AND WATER ARE AT RISK OF HYPOTHERMIA, HEAT STROKE, INJURY AND DEATH IN THE CASE OF SEVERE WEATHER, WHICH INCLUDES HIGH WINDS, HURRICANES, TORNADOES AND MORE.

WE NEED THIS LAW BECAUSE SOME MARYLAND COUNTIES RECOGNIZE THE RISKS OF EXTREME WEATHER FOR DOGS LEFT OUTSIDE AND REQUIRE EITHER THAT THEY BE BROUGHT INDOORS OR THAT ADEQUATE SHELTER BE PROVIDED OUTDOORS. THE REMAINING MD JURISDICTIONS HAVE NO LAWS ON DOGS OUTDOORS IN EXTREME WEATHER. THAT MEANS FOR DOGS IN MORE THAN HALF OF THE STATE, THERE ARE NO PROTECTIONS FROM THE ELEMENTS.

**WHAT THE BILL DOES:** HB 16 DOES TWO THINGS:

1. DEFINES EXTREME WEATHER AS BELOW 32 OR CONDITIONS DURING AN ACTIVE WEATHER WARNING OR ADVISORY ISSUED BY THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE.
2. ADDS A SUITABLE SHADE PROVISION IN HOT WEATHER.
3. DESCRIBES WHAT SUITABLE SHELTER IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT. SUITABLE SHELTER MUST HAVE:

FOUR WALLS AND A DOORWAY; BE PROPERLY VENTILATED; HAVE A WEATHERPROOF ROOF; BE RAISED OFF THE GROUND; HAVE INSULATION OR HEAT TO ALLOW THE DOG TO MAINTAIN ITS BODY TEMPERATURE, AND BE SUITABLE FOR THE DOG'S AGE, SIZE, BREED AND CONDITION.

SUITABLE SHELTER IS **NOT** A CRAWL SPACE UNDER A BUILDING; A SPACE UNDER A PARKED CAR; A FLOOR OF WIRE OR CHAIN LINK; OR A STRUCTURE MADE OF CARDBOARD OR FLIMSY MATERIAL THAT CANNOT WITHSTAND THE ELEMENTS.

**CHANGES MADE TO ADDRESS DOGS WORKING OR IN TRAINING:** AT THE REQUEST OF ADVOCATES AND OWNERS, THE BILL HAS BEEN AMENDED TO EXEMPT DOGS ENGAGED IN TRAINING, SPORTING OR HERDING ACTIVITIES. IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THIS BILL ADDRESSES SITUATIONS WHERE DOGS ARE UNATTENDED FOR MORE THAN 30 MINUTES AND CONFINED TO BACKYARDS OR OTHER PROPERTIES DURING EXTREME WEATHER.

MR. CHAIRMAN, DOGS ARE OUR BEST FRIENDS. THIS BILL WILL ENSURE IF THEY MUST BE LEFT OUTDOORS FOR MORE THAN 30 MINUTES IN EXTREME WEATHER, THEY HAVE ACCESS TO SHELTER THAT KEEPS THEM SAFE. THANK YOU AND I URGE A FAVORABLE REPORT.

####