



Maryland Veterinary Medical Association

Thursday January 13, 2022

HB 191 - Department of Agriculture - Spay/Neuter Fund - Extension and Report - FAVORABLE

Chairman Barve and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

The Maryland Veterinary Medical Association (MDVMA) was established in 1886 and is the largest professional and advocacy organization for veterinarians and technicians in Maryland. MDVMA's mission is to serve as a leading resource for the veterinary community through communication, education, representation and support for the advancement of animal and public health in Maryland.

HB 191 would extend the "sunset" of a fund that has the purpose of reducing animal shelter overpopulation and cat and dog euthanasia rates. The fund would finance grants to local governments and animal welfare organizations for programs that most efficiently facilitate and promote the provision of spay and neuter services for cats and dogs in the State. This benefits society by reducing overpopulation of cats and dogs through non-lethal means and mitigating behaviors that may damage the human-animal bond and contribute to abandonment and relinquishment to shelters and other humane organizations.

According to the Maryland Department of Agriculture, funding these grant 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.

The Spay and Neuter Grants Program is currently well funded and operating as designed and envisioned. 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, 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.

MDVMA supports this important public and animal welfare policy that keeps these animal companions with their owners and minimizes euthanasia.

The Maryland Veterinary Medical Association Respectfully Urges a Favorable Report

Contacts:

Marisa Francis, MDVMA Executive Director – (717) – 480 – 8376

Moirá Cyphers & Josh Howe, Compass Government Relations – (443)-343-7143

Maryland Veterinary Medical Association

8574 Paxton Street, Hummelstown, PA 17036 | (410) 305-7083