



January 13, 2022

Representative Kumar Barve
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
Maryland General Assembly
Via email

Re: MD HB 191

Dear Representative Barve and committee:

The American Feed Industry Association (AFIA) is writing to provide information on MD HB 191 The Department of Agriculture - Spay/Neuter Fund - Extension and Report.

The AFIA appreciates the efforts in Maryland to support access to low-cost spay and neuter services as an effective tool to reduce the number of pet euthanasias. We support the removal of the sunset provision of HB 191. However, we strongly oppose any action taken by the Maryland General Assembly which may lead directly or indirectly to an increase in fees collected from pet food manufacturers to further expand the program.

Explore alternative funding sources. The AFIA agrees in principle with the program's intended goals of targeting spay/neuter support for pet owners in low-income communities and populations. Pet food manufacturers are concerned about the plight of unwanted pets and frequently donate product to shelters and other pet care services. If the proposed report determines that expansion of the spay/neuter fund is merited we encourage the legislature to request the examination of different funding sources beyond exploring the "market capacity for increasing the fees assessed on each brand name or product name of commercial feed." We encourage the addition of language requesting the report to identify alternative sources of potential funding.

Maryland citizens can increase the funds available for spay/neuter procedures available to pets owned by low-income families through existing or new charitable resources rather than increasing the burden on businesses who do not contribute to the problem of unwanted pets and are already supporting animal shelters in other ways. These alternative sources of funds should be detailed in the report.

The AFIA will not support any continuation of the spay/neuter fund beyond the existing fee of \$100 on each brand name or product name of commercial feed and we urge members of the General Assembly to explore alternative ways to expand the program if the report deems that measure to be necessary.

Sincerely,

Louise Calderwood
Director of Regulatory Affairs

Our Industry. Our Passion. Our Voice.

Based in Arlington, Va., the AFIA is the world's largest organization devoted exclusively to representing the business, legislative and regulatory interests of the U.S. animal food industry and its suppliers. Founded in 1909 as the American Feed Manufacturers Association, the name changed to the American Feed Industry Association in 1985 to recognize the importance of all types of companies involved in the feed manufacturing industry—from manufacturers of commercial and integrated feed and pet food to ingredient suppliers to equipment manufacturers. The AFIA is also recognized as the leader on international industry developments, representing the industry at global forums, including within the International Feed Industry Federation.

AFIA's members include nearly 700 domestic and international companies, such as livestock feed and pet food manufacturers, integrators, pharmaceutical companies, ingredient suppliers, equipment manufacturers and supply companies that provide other products or services to feed manufacturers. Several state, national and regional associations are also AFIA members.