



MARYLAND VOTES FOR ANIMALS

PO Box 10411
BALTIMORE, MD 21209

March 30, 2022

To: House Environment & Transportation Committee
From: Lisa Radov, President and Chairman, Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc.
Re: Crimes – Unattended Dogs - Extreme Weather Conditions and Heat – SB 44 – SUPPORT with amendments

Chairman Barve, Vice Chairman Stein, members of the Environment & Transportation Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Lisa Radov. I am the President and Chairman of Maryland Votes for Animals. We champion humane legislation to improve the lives of animals in Maryland. Speaking for Maryland Votes for Animals, our Board of Directors, and our members across Maryland, I respectfully request that the Environment & Transportation Committee vote favorably for Crimes – Unattended Dogs - Extreme Weather Conditions and Heat – SB 44 with the amendments passed in the Senate and agreed to by the House sponsor of the crossfile of this bill, Delegate Lehman.

This bill will give law enforcement and the public clear and consistent standards with respect to leaving dogs outside and unattended in extreme weather conditions and heat. Many Maryland counties have passed laws to protect dogs in extreme weather. While there are fundamental similarities, there are some differences in each of those laws that are specific to the needs of that county. The standards put forth in this bill are the result of feedback from animal control agencies across Maryland, including those with and without extreme weather laws. The bill works for the varied conditions in Maryland counties as it not only enumerates basic, commonsense standards to protect unattended dogs from suffering in extreme weather conditions and heat, but also it allows for dogs to remain outdoors provided that they have continuous access to suitable shelter or shade, which is defined in the bill.

Animal control officers are usually called when the situation is dire and dogs are suffering seizures, heatstroke, hypothermia, and death after being outdoors for long periods of time in extreme weather conditions. This bill will reduce the suffering these animals endure, and the serious consequences, including death, caused by these conditions. It will provide a consistent standard across Maryland that does not change as a dog is moved between jurisdictions. Establishing guidelines about dogs left outdoors enables animal control officers to intervene before a dog shows symptoms of acute distress. Moreover, adding clarity to the law can foster both public awareness and compliance, which could potentially avert some of these life-threatening situations before they occur.

Let's make 2022 the year that we get protection for these dogs suffering outside in extreme weather conditions and heat.

In closing, I would like to thank Senator West for his sponsorship of SB 44 and ask this committee for a favorable report.