



MARYLAND VOTES FOR ANIMALS

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March 2, 2023

To: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
From: Lisa Radov, President and Chair, Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc.
Re: Research and Testing Facilities That Use Animals – Licensing and Regulation – SB 495 – Support

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Lisa Radov. I am the President and Chair 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 Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee vote favorably for Research and Testing Facilities That Use Animals – Licensing and Regulation – SB 495.

This bill would establish comprehensive guidelines and oversight to protect animals used in research and require that non-animal methods of research must be used whenever possible. This bill would:

- Prohibit the use of dogs and cats when assessing the safety of chemicals such as pesticides and household cleaners unless required by federal law.
- Ban cruel laboratory practices such as devocalizing dogs, obtaining dogs and cats for research from animal shelters, and conducting euthanasia in an inhumane manner.
- Require laboratories to obtain a state license and report on how the animals at their facilities are being used. USDA-registered laboratories would be inspected regularly to ensure proper care of the animals used in experiments.
- Require biomedical research laboratories that use animals to provide justification for the need to use them in experiments.

Many of the requirements of this bill are already required by federal law but are not being enforced in our state. Under US Law and policies, scientists must consider alternative methods before using animals for toxicology research and testing:

- The Animal Welfare Act requires that facilities conducting animal research and testing approve proposed animal use and ensure that alternatives are used where appropriate.
- The Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, which applies to NIH and other federal agencies under the U.S. Public Health Service, requires that research proposals justify animal use and the specific procedures.

The NIH Revitalization Act of 1993 directed the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to support research to replace, reduce, and refine animal use in biomedical research, and to develop and validate alternatives to animal use for acute and chronic safety testing.

Nine out of ten experimental drugs fail in clinical studies using animal subjects. The differences between the physiology, anatomy, and metabolism of humans and animals make it difficult to apply data derived from animal studies to human conditions. A good example of this is Lipitor, Pfizer's blockbuster drug for reducing cholesterol, which was not promising in early animal experiments. Fortunately, a research scientist requested that the drug be tested in a small group of healthy human volunteers. It was only then that its effectiveness was demonstrated.

We are transitioning from depending on animal testing to alternatives that yield better results and are more cost-effective such as testing cells and tissues in test tubes or cell cultures, 3D tissue culture - also referred to as organs-on-a-chip, computational and mathematical models, and stem cell research. As Maryland moves forward with these state-of-art alternatives for animal testing, we need the protections outlined in this bill. Laboratories in Maryland must be on record for the kind of research that they are doing and why they need to use animals. They should be held to the highest standards out of respect for their subjects - who never volunteered to participate in the studies and are not being compensated.

Maryland's lab animals are counting on you!

In closing, I would like to thank Senator Kramer for his sponsorship of SB 495 and ask the committee to give this bill a favorable report.