



MARYLAND VOTES FOR ANIMALS

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February 15, 2023

To: Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
From: Lisa Radov, President and Chairman, Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc.
Re: Hunting- Snares, Traps, and Other Similar Devices – Identification Requirement – SB 275 - 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 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 Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee vote favorably for Hunting- Snares, Traps, and Other Similar Devices – Identification Requirement – SB 275.

Every year, millions of animals in the United States suffer a cruel and painful death after being caught in traps. Many of these unfortunate victims are not being trapped for food or to protect property but are instead being killed to support the global fur trade. Moreover, unintended victims are often household pets who suffer the terrible fate of being imprisoned in one of these trapping devices only to bleed or starve to death.

The trapping devices rely on the principle of restraining an animal. Steel-jaw leghold traps, also called foothold traps, are powered by strong springs that slam shut on an animal and exert excruciating force. Animals caught in leghold traps suffer from torn flesh, cut tendons and ligaments, and broken bones, and can further injure themselves, break teeth, and dislocate joints in their struggle to escape. Body-crushing, or Conibear, traps are designed to kill an animal when two rotating jaws close on each side of the animal's neck or chest, crushing the body. While these traps may be intended to kill instantly, they do so inconsistently and can subject the animal to unimaginable suffering. Snares, or cable restraints, use a wire or cable loop that tightens around an animal and causes extreme suffering, asphyxia, and even death. Snares are designed to kill through strangulation, but the animal can suffer for hours or even days if the snare is incorrectly deployed or irregularly checked.

Many states have passed ballot measures banning or placing restrictions on trapping including Arizona, California, Colorado, Massachusetts, and Washington. In addition to the suffering of the animals and safety issues for people and pets, trapping has not been proven to be an effective method of population control as often animals reproduce in larger numbers to compensate. Moreover, there is no compelling evidence that traps are an effective or efficient way of controlling the spread of rabies.

This bill is an important step forward in protecting unsuspecting animals, pets, and the public from harm caused by these dangerous trapping devices.

In closing, I would like to thank Senator Bailey for his sponsorship of SB 275 and ask the committee to give this bill a favorable report.