



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

February 15, 2023

Environment and Transportation Committee

HB365

Department of Agriculture - Spay/Neuter Fund

FAVORABLE

The Humane Society of the United States, on behalf of our members and supporters in Maryland, urges a favorable report and speedy action on HB365.

This committee should be proud of its work to create the Spay/Neuter Fund, which provides a national model for how to raise revenue for this critical, lifesaving work. We are also grateful to this committee for renewing the Fund last year and to ensure that it continues to operate.

The Spay/Neuter Fund is one of the most effective and cost-effective tools existing today for supporting pet owners, easing the burden on our shelters, and improving the lives of companion animals. Since the Fund was established in 2014, euthanasia of companion animals across the state have decreased 55% and overall animal intake has dropped 17%. It is estimated that spaying and neutering just one male and one female cat can prevent more than 2,000 unwanted births over four years!

However, the impact of the Spay/Neuter Fund is limited by the fact that the fee has not increased since it reached its initial levels in 2015. Since then, inflation has skyrocketed across all the expenses associated with these procedures – especially staff costs to hold clinics and perform surgeries. To compound that problem, shelters are experiencing historically high levels of surrenders, and euthanasia rates are rising again for the first time in many years.

This is a life-saving and valuable bill that ensure the fees for the Spay/Neuter Fund are structured to keep pace with inflation, ensuring this critical program can continue to function at the highest level. We urge a favorable report on HB365.