



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

March 9, 2023

Environment and Transportation Committee

HB 874

***Office of the Attorney General -
Environment and Natural Resources Monitoring Unit – Establishment***

FAVORABLE

The Humane Society of the United States, on behalf of our members and supporters in Maryland, urges a favorable report on HB874. This bill creates a special unit within the Attorney General’s office to prosecute environmental and natural resources crimes and provides support to Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in investigating civil suits. The creation of this special unit will dramatically increase the state’s ability to enforce our critical laws related to wildlife management.

This committee should be proud of the strong framework of wildlife laws it has passed over the past few years, from banning wildlife killing contests to ending wildlife trafficking within the state. Maryland has also created a robust framework of hunting and trapping regulations. When those laws are not enforced, animals suffer.

Too often, cases involving natural resources crime are technical, complex, and outside the regular jurisdiction of the lawyers tasked with prosecuting them. As a result, these cases are less likely to be brought, less likely to be rigorously prosecuted, and less likely to result in a victory in court. Creating a special unit that will be tasked with building expertise in this area and assisting with the legal enforcement of our laws will have a tremendous impact on the ability to prosecute these crimes successfully and vigorously.

HB874 will improve our ability as a state to implement, oversee, and enforce violations of our wildlife laws, and we urge a favorable report.