



National Association for
**BIOMEDICAL
RESEARCH**

March 7, 2024

The Honorable Senator Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment
2 West- Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Feldman:

The National Association for Biomedical Research (NABR) opposes SB761- Testing Facilities That Use Animals – Licensing and Regulation.

For more than 45 years, NABR has been the nation's only organization solely dedicated to advocating for sound public policy in support of ethical and essential laboratory animal research and the lifesaving discoveries they produce. NABR's diverse and unified membership includes more than 320 universities, medical and veterinary schools, teaching hospitals, pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies, patient groups, and academic and professional societies that rely on humane and responsible use of research animals to advance global human and animal health.

This bill would require facilities that use animals in research, education, or testing to be licensed by the State Department of Agriculture. The bill requires an inspection and payment of a licensing fee before the State may issue such a license. It creates a State Inspector of Animal Welfare, which is to inspect all licensed facilities each year, a responsibility it can delegate to animal rights organizations. It requires researchers to justify the use of animals to the state inspector, addressing whether another suitable model is available, whether the research can be performed ethically on human subjects, and whether animals are necessary to accelerate responses to life-threatening or debilitating conditions. In addition, it includes provisions regarding the adoption of dogs and cats used for research and creates duplicative and onerous reporting requirements. There are significant criminal penalties associated with violations of the bill.

Animal research remains vital to our mission to understand disease, discover targeted therapies, alleviate suffering, and improve and increase the quality of life. Biomedical research projects involving animals, governed by a strict structure of laws, regulations, and guidelines, continue to yield invaluable data in the process of discovering new therapies to treat, cure, and prevent disease.

NABR believes this legislation is unnecessarily duplicative of oversight that is already required at the federal level. Under current federal law, research facilities are subject to unannounced USDA inspections and must comply with the Animal Welfare Act as well as the *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*. Policies and protocols are in place, and strictly adhered to, that address animal housing and care, veterinary medical care, facilities management, training, and occupational health. Furthermore, most research institutions are also accredited by AAALAC International. AAALAC International is the primary accrediting body for animal research programs in the United States and elsewhere.

This legislation would slow breakthroughs in biomedical research. Cancer therapies, immunizations, organ transplants, reconstructive surgeries, and many other innovations have been brought to fruition through research conducted at our member institutions with the ethical and essential use of animal models. We support efforts to replace, reduce, and refine the use of animals in drug and vaccine development. However, new drug and vaccine testing technologies to realize this vision at a broad scale and that meet regulatory acceptance are still many years away. We ask the committee to unfavorably report SB761 so research facilities can continue to create lifesaving treatments for diseases, discover targeted therapies, alleviate suffering, and improve and increase the quality of life for both humans and animals.

Sincerely,

Matthew R. Bailey, President