



Bill: SB 761

Committee: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment

Position: Support

Date: March 8, 2024

Hello, my name is Sherman McFarland. I am a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health, and I have a Juris Doctor from the UC-Davis School of Law. I am testifying in support of SB 761 because it prohibits testing facilities from using dogs and cats to test the safety or efficacy of chemical substances, drugs, vaccines, ingredients, products, and product formulations, unless required by federal law. SB 761 should also reduce the use of animals in experiments because, under the language of the bill, testing facilities may not use a traditional animal test method if the agency responsible for regulating the specific product or activity for which a test method is being used has approved an alternative, non-animal test method.

Furthermore, SB 761 prohibits testing facilities from using, either for research or testing, a dog or cat obtained from an auction, flea market, or animal shelter, or from a person that did not breed and raise the dog or cat. Testing facilities are also prohibited from using dogs sold by Class B dealers licensed under the federal Animal Welfare Act, and from using dogs or cats that have undergone a devocalization surgery. Furthermore, SB 761 prevents testing facilities from performing a devocalization surgery on a dog or a cat.

In addition, SB 761 requires that, every year, each testing facility that uses live animals for research, education, or testing shall report the following to the Maryland Secretary of Agriculture: (1) the number of each species of vertebrate animal owned and used by the facility; (2) the number of dogs and cats released to animal rescue organizations; (3) the type and number of alternative test methods and traditional animal test methods used; (4) the purpose of any tests performed using alternative test methods or traditional animal test methods; and (5) the number of traditional animal test method waivers and canine or feline toxicological experiment waivers used. This reporting requirement should enable the enforcement of SB 761's requirements and goals.

Moreover, SB 761 allows the Maryland Department of Agriculture to enter into an agreement with an animal welfare organization, local animal control agency, or other similar entity to conduct the inspections that the State Inspector of Animal Welfare must perform under the language of the bill.

In conclusion, I believe that this bill will spare the suffering of animals in Maryland. Dogs and cats will be spared from being experimented on for drug, vaccine, ingredient, product, product formulation, and chemical substance safety and efficacy tests, unless required by federal



law. Dogs and cats will also be spared from devocalization surgeries. In addition, SB 761 advances the use of alternative, non-animal test methods, and is designed to ensure animal welfare. SB 761 represents a humane step forward for Maryland, and I encourage the legislature to pass it on behalf of the welfare of animals in this state.

Thank you very much for allowing me to testify in support of SB 761 today. If you have any questions about my testimony, or need more information, please contact me via email at smcfar13@jh.edu

Please be aware that I am submitting this testimony in my individual capacity and that the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of Johns Hopkins University or the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health.