

February 15, 2024

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Senate Bill 641

Department of Agriculture - Spay/Neuter Fund

Written Testimony from Susan Yu, Derwood, Maryland

FAVORABLE - I support passage of SB641

My name is Susan Yu. I've lived in Maryland for almost 40 years. I SUPPORT SB641 as a Maryland resident.

The cost of spay and neuter and veterinary care is sometimes prohibitive to low income or even moderate-income families. Some people do not have the means to transport their pets.

If you have dogs and cats, you may understand how much comfort, laughter, and love they bring. Although people enjoy the companionship of animals, some people do not understand the responsibilities of pet ownership and do not understand that puppies and kittens turn into adult dogs and cats that need homes.

If we can provide means of help and a robust education program, people can keep their beloved pets and not add to the problem of overpopulation.

According to Shelter Animals Count, the Database (shelteranimalscount.org), 6.5 million dogs and cats entered shelters in 2023. Of those, 3.3 million cats and 3.2 million dogs. 48% were strays, 25% were surrenders, 18% transfers, and 9% other. For dogs, 2.2 million were adopted (57%), 625,000 returned to owner, 561,000 transferred between organizations, 37,000 died in care, 359,000 euthanized. For cats - 2.6 million were adopted (65%), 363,000 returned to owner/field, 427,000 transferred between organizations, 111,000 died in care, 330,000 were euthanized.

These are just shelter statistics. What number of pets are abandoned that die of cold or starvation, are left to die tied to a pole, killed by their owners because they are no longer wanted, or end up with a hoarder?

We can help this cycle of overpopulation. It's always been spay and neuter. This would reduce the number of unwanted pets and free up shelter space. According to Spay-Neuter Assistant Program (snapu.org), up to 508 puppies can be born from one unspayed female dog and her offspring in seven years. Up to 4,948 kittens can be born from one unspayed female cat and her offspring in seven years.

Let's pass SB641 for the dogs, cats, and the humans who love them.