



February 5, 2024

BILL SB0555  
HART for Animals, Inc.  
Paula Yudelevit, Executive Director  
Favorable

**ADOPT.**  
**DONATE.**  
**VOLUNTEER.**

HART for Animals, located in Garrett County, is in support of HB85. Our organization has had the privilege of being a recipient of this grant since 2015 and because of the grant we have spayed/neutered 3,665 dogs and cats under our “Lifesaver” program.

Most of our clients that fall within the guidelines of the program are from Garrett and Allegany Counties. Garrett County’s poverty rate is 15% and Allegany County is 18%. Based on the Petsmart Charities Spay/Neuter Grant Tool, 18,450 dogs and cats are owned by households living in poverty. It assumes that 80% of those pets are unaltered. The MDA Spay/Neuter Grant is making a significant difference by helping our low-income neighbors with the funds to pay for the surgeries.

HART has seen a decrease over the past 4 years in the number of surgeries, we’ve been able to perform because of the amount we’ve received from the program and the costs of surgical supplies and medications. We went from 437 in 2019 to 357 in 2020. In 2023, the demand for these surgeries was so high, 95% of 327 surgeries were completed by May.

Increasing the pet food product fee to \$130 for larger companies and voluntary donations would allow organizations like HART and the other 36 that apply for the grant would help reduce the number of unwanted cats and dogs which in turn will reduce the euthanasia numbers in our shelters.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of HART, thank you for making the effort to increase the funding for this invaluable program.

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