

My name is Helen Woods and I am the president of Laurel Cats, Inc. Laurel Cats is an all-volunteer cat spay/neuter and rescue organization serving Laurel Maryland. Our primary goal is to empty the streets in our community of feral cats through the humane and publicly accepted practice of spay and neuter. To this date, we have affected a greater than 50% decline in Laurel's outdoor cat population over the last decade through spay and neuter. This decline in the cat population has allowed wildlife populations in Laurel to rebound and also addresses human health and nuisance concerns associated with feral cats. Much of this work has been funded by the Maryland Department of Agriculture's spay and neuter grant program. Thank you for this program!

Inflation has posed a significant adverse challenge for our work. The veterinarians we work with have faced major across the board cost increases as rates climb even greater than the average national inflation rate. For example, over the past 10 years:

The cost of surgery gloves has gone up 105% from \$22.72/box to \$44.72/box of 50 pairs

A box of 1ml syringes was \$10.60 for a box of 100 and now is \$14.85 so an increase of 40%

Rabies vaccines have gone up 84%

Feline distemper vaccines have gone up 68%

E-collars have gone up 51%

Isoflurane has gone up 51%

Carprofen has gone up 97%

Ketamine has gone up 200%

Insulin syringes have gone up 24%

Oral base syringes have gone up 42%

All of these costs have been passed along to customers, especially municipal shelters and rescue groups like ours who bring in animals in mass to be spayed/neutered.

Unfortunately, the original authors of the bill authorizing the MDA spay neuter grant program did not anticipate inflation. A grant that would have fixed 500 animals ten years ago, fixes far fewer animals today.

I would like to urge you to address this oversight in the original legislation by adding a mechanism to the program to address inflation going forward. Such a mechanism will allow non-profits and shelters to continue to spay and neuter animal despite investable inflation in the future.