



Dave McDowell, Director

CALVERT COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

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Board of Commissioners
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January 31, 2024

The Honorable Senator William C. Smith, Jr. Chair
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Re: SB0017 – Crimes Relating to Animals – Conviction and Sentencing
Position: Favorable

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee:

The Calvert County Board of County Commissioners and the Calvert County Department of Public Safety support Senate Bill 0017.

Calvert County Animal Control restricts charging individuals, at the felony level, to situations where there is *intent* involved with effecting abuse, mutilation, torture, and/or death on an animal.

Calvert County Animal Control has recently investigated and charged two dog fighting cases involving multiple dogs. The cases were comprised of dogs being ripped apart for their owner's and spectator's entertainment. Some dogs at the properties had old untreated broken limbs and disfiguring lacerations. No evidence of veterinary treatment was found. Additionally, the injuries ran deeper than physical, as the dogs subjected to this environment, were mentally damaged and posed a continuing risk to public safety from aggression to other animals.

A favorable outcome for Senate Bill 0017 will ensure that each animal subjected to the most egregious acts, caused by a person, will have justice. Removing the ability to sentence for each animal takes away the accountability for those involved in crimes intended to abuse animals to the felony level, in Maryland.

Your time and attention to this matter is appreciated. I would be happy to provide additional information or answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Crystal G. Dowd".
Crystal G. Dowd
Deputy Director
Public Safety