



# FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

## DIVISION OF ANIMAL CONTROL

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County Executive

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### **SB 17 – Criminal Law – Crimes Relating to Animals – Conviction and Sentencing**

**DATE:** February 1, 2024  
**COMMITTEE:** Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
**POSITION:** Favorable  
**FROM:** The Office of Frederick County Animal Control

As the Director of Frederick County Office of Animal Control, I urge the committee to give SB 17 – Criminal Law – Crimes Relating to Animals – Conviction and Sentencing a favorable report.

This bill will establish that each animal harmed in an animal cruelty case will be prosecuted as a separate offence, and that a conviction of a crime relating to animals may not be merged with another conviction.

Currently, during cases of crimes against animals, an offender may not be charged individually for each animal harmed. Furthermore, these convictions may currently be merged with other cases. This is problematic because it leads to the perpetrators not receiving proportional penalties, therefore increasing the likelihood of reoffending.

SB 17 is incredibly important to setting the precedent that animal cruelty will not be tolerated. This will not only assist in decreasing these cases, but has the potential to reduce additional crimes committed by these perpetrators. Offenders who commit violent crimes against animals are more likely to commit violence against others, especially a domestic partner. Therefore, it is incredibly important that Maryland makes clear these offenders will receive proper sentencing.

Thank you for your consideration of SB 17. I urge you to advance this bill with a favorable report.