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Bill: SB 537

Committee: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment

Position: Support

Date: February 25, 2025

Dear Chairman Feldman,

Thank you very much to you and the members of the Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment for welcoming testimony on SB 537. My name is Sherman McFarland, and I am the Director of Policy for the American Anti-Vivisection Society (AAVS). AAVS's mission is to end the use of animals in science through education, advocacy, and the development of alternative methods. Since 1883, we have been monitoring the use of animals in science including progress in alternatives. On behalf of our members and supporters, including those in Maryland, I am submitting written testimony in support of SB 537 because this legislation will require all research and testing facilities in the state to: (1) annually report the number of dogs and cats they owned and used in research, education, or testing; and (2) annually report the number of dogs and cats they released to animal rescue organizations for adoptions. By including a reporting requirement, SB 537 will allow the State of Maryland to understand how many dogs and cats are used each year in research, education, and testing by research and testing facilities, and whether facilities are complying with the current law to place into adoption dogs and cats no longer to be used in research.

As stated above, SB 537 requires that every research and testing facility in Maryland that uses live animals in research, education, or testing shall report to the Maryland Secretary of Agriculture the following information about the preceding 12-month period: (1) the number of dogs or cats owned and used by the research or testing facility; and (2) the number of dogs or cats released to animal rescue organizations and the names of the animal rescue organizations to which the dogs and cats were released. Research and testing facilities in Maryland would be required to report this information to the state Secretary of Agriculture each year on or before January 31. The Maryland Secretary of Agriculture would then collect this information reported by research and testing facilities, prepare an annual report of the information, and post it on the state Department of Agriculture's website. SB 537 also has an enforcement mechanism because it levies monetary penalties against research and testing facilities that violate the provisions of the bill.

In addition, SB 537 requires schools or institutions of higher education that use animals in research, education, experimentation, or testing to annually report the results of any inspection of the school or institution of higher education performed by the Department of Agriculture. Schools and

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institutions of higher education would also be required to report any violations found during these inspections and to file these annual reports on or before December 31.

AAVS strongly encourages the Committee to vote in favor of SB 537 because it will allow Maryland to understand the fate of dogs and cats used in research and testing in our state. Thank you very much for allowing me to testify in support of SB 537. If you or any member of the Committee has questions about my testimony, or needs more information, please contact me via email at smcfarland@aavs.org.

Sincerely,

Sherman McFarland

Director of Policy