

February 27, 2025

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment
2 West-Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chairman Feldman:

The Pennsylvania Society for Biomedical Research (PSBR) opposes Senate Bill No. 537 - *Research Facilities and Testing Facilities That Use Animals – Adoption and Reporting Requirements*, which would, among other provisions, require research facilities and testing facilities to submit to the Department of Agriculture certain information regarding dogs and cats on or before a certain date each year; and require a school or an institution of higher education that uses animals for certain purposes to submit a report on the results of certain inspections to the General Assembly on or before a certain date each year.

First, we should note that PSBR and its members fully support the re-homing of laboratory animals. Without exception, research institutions in Maryland have policies and procedures in place to re-home animals when their time in research is complete. Most often, these animals are re-homed with individuals, including the employees who care for the animals each day. Adding additional regulatory requirements will not change this fact and only further complicates animal re-homings without taking into consideration the best interests of the animals.

Importantly, the reporting requirements in this legislation would create significant issues for the research community. In some cases, the information is duplicative of reporting already publicly accessible at the federal level. Specifically, institutions already report annually the number and species of animals used in research and similar details are also reported in each inspection report. As a whole, the reporting required by the federal government is so significant that legislation and regulations were specifically developed to seek ways to reduce administrative burdens.

Equally important, the individuals and organizations who receive re-homed animals are kept anonymous and are subject to re-homing agreements that are confidential to protect both their own privacy and the animals placed with these individuals or organizations. There are well-documented incidents of harassment and intimidation by anti-research activists against those who assist in the re-homing of research animals. To be clear, the names of organizations and the individuals with whom animals are re-homed should remain private.

In summary, PSBR believes strongly that this legislation unnecessarily seeks to further regulate an already highly regulated research community, which could increase the cost, both in time and resources, of advancing research and science in Maryland. It also makes the state “unfriendly” to research that requires animal models and could drive away the best and brightest researchers to institutions located in other jurisdictions, as well as lead to the investment of research and development in locations. This legislation would make Maryland a less acceptable jurisdiction for research in a time when domestic research is critical and in need of promotion.

Thank you for considering our views on this important issue.

Pennsylvania Society for Biomedical Research

By:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Leach".

Thomas A. Leach
Executive Director