



Maryland's Association of Animal Care and Control Agencies and Humane Societies

**PO Box 1143
Easton, Maryland 21601**

**HB-0089 – Criminal Law- Crimes Relating to Animals- Conviction and Sentencing
Maryland House of Delegates Judiciary Committee**

January 17, 2025

Dear Honorable Chairman Clippinger, Vice-Chair Bartlett, and members of the committee:

Professional Animal Workers of Maryland, the state organization comprised of animal control agencies and humane societies unanimously supports and encourages a favorable and speedy report on HB0089.

Cases which rise to the level of prosecution are the most egregious we see in humane law enforcement. These cases involve acts of hoarding, aggravated cruelty to animals including but not limited to cruelly beating, torturing, mutilating, sexual contact, killing of an animal, dog fighting and cock fighting. Often in these cases there is more than one victim-animal- which has been harmed. As the current law stands, whether a defendant harms 1 animal or 100 animals, the charges and hence sentencing would be the same.

We support the bill as it will directly address the Sentencing Commission decision on this issue. We appreciate the work put in by the sponsor to identify alternative language that satisfies the work and amendments requested last year on this bill, and we ask this committee to issue a speedy and favorable report.

As I had the opportunity to share when I testified before you last year on this bill, these cases are not everyday occurrences, however when they do occur, they are horrific crimes. Animals are caught in a legal dilemma; they are technically property, but as these crimes very often result in the loss of life, it is insufficient to limit felony charges in the same manner we would a vehicle, a TV or other items which are not living beings.

Professional Animal Workers of Maryland believe the passing of this bill is a crucial tool in protecting the animals and people of Maryland.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Patty Crankshaw-Quimby, CAWA

Executive Director/Chief Animal Control Officer: Talbot Humane/ Talbot County Animal Control

President: Professional Animal Workers of Maryland