



**House Economic Matters Committee, March 11, 2025**

**Testimony on House Bill 1551**

**Department of Agriculture – Regulation of Dog Breeders: UNFAVORABLE**

Maryland Association for Wildlife Conservation is a not-for-profit 501(c)(6) for the preservation and promotion of countryside sports. Our members own and breed pack hounds, such as foxhounds, bassets and beagles.

MAWC opposes House Bill 1551.

While we appreciate the desire to create an ongoing funding source to underwrite the expenses of animal shelters and spay/neuter programs, and we appreciate and applaud responsible breeding practices, MAWC does not believe that creating a redundant registry program is the solution.

Requiring citizens to register their breeding dogs with the Maryland Department of Agriculture essentially duplicates Section 13, parts 100 – 134 of the Maryland Annotated Code for Local Government, which requires local governments to register and license dogs, and to make annual reports to the Maryland Department of Labor and Licensing.

The mandate in HB 1551 to establish a fund to underwriting spay and neuter programs is likewise redundant, as the Maryland Department of Agriculture already has a Spay and Neuter Grant Program, established by legislation in 2013, and which is entirely funded by the pet food companies.

HB 1551 would also require breeders to microchip all puppies, a practice which many of the breed registries also encourage or even require.

**MAWC urges an UNFAVORABLE report from the committee on HB 1551.**

Sincerely,

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