



January 30, 2026

Re: HB53  
End private ownership of zebras and macropods in Maryland

Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

On behalf of In Defense of Animals, an international animal rights organization, I am writing in support of HB53, which expands the list of dangerous wild animals prohibited from being held by private owners in Maryland. Maryland's exemplary law already prohibits private ownership of big cats, bears, some venomous snakes, and nonhuman primates. It is now critical to include zebras, wallabies, and kangaroos, and wallaroos to protect both the animals and the public. There is a history of zebras and kangaroos attacking their owners, and even children who visit the private facilities, resulting in serious injury and even death. These are large, muscular animals that have often escaped their enclosures, risking more danger to the general public

These animals suffer greatly from the conditions of their captivity, which include poor nutrition, injury and vulnerability to contagious diseases. And like all wild animals, they require vastly more space than small, private facilities can provide. Baby kangaroos stay with their mothers until 1 and a half years old. When they are removed from their mother at a younger age, they endure trauma that lasts a lifetime.

I urge you to pass HB53, making the current prohibition on private ownership of wild, dangerous animals more robust and inclusive and offering more protection for the animals and the citizens of Maryland.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

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