



Maryland Veterinary Medical Association (MDVMA)

Established in 1886, MDVMA is a volunteer, non-profit organization comprised primarily of licensed Maryland Veterinarians.

SB0423 - Research Facilities and Testing Facilities That Use Animals - Prohibitions and Adoption Requirements (Animal Research Modernization and Best Practices Act of 2026)

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

February 13, 2026

MDVMA Position: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

On behalf of the Maryland Veterinary Medical Association, we appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on SB0423. The MDVMA supports the overarching goal of ensuring ethical standards and humane treatment for animals in research settings. Our profession is deeply committed to the oath we have sworn to minimize animal suffering and promote public health, and as veterinarians, we hold in high regard the contributions these animals make to the advancement of society. However, to ensure this legislation is practically applicable and aligns with the highest clinical standards of our profession, we request several critical technical amendments.

Our proposed amendments focus on maintaining professional veterinary standards, ensuring animal welfare through timely intervention, and clarifying the scope of reporting requirements to ensure administrative feasibility.

Currently, Section 15-102(C) requires that dogs or cats at these facilities may be euthanized only by a 'lethal injection of sodium pentobarbital'. While this is a standard method, clinical best practices evolve. We recommend striking the specific method and instead requiring that animals be "euthanized only in accordance with the most current AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals". These guidelines are a recognized gold standard for our profession. By referencing the AVMA guidelines, the law will remain current with scientific advancements without requiring future legislative updates.

Additionally, we request that section 15-102(C)(2) be amended to allow for 'indirect supervision' rather than 'direct supervision'. In clinical and research settings, modern research protocols utilize 'humane end points' which are predetermined criteria that indicate when an animal's pain or distress has reached a level where euthanasia is the most ethical course of action. Requiring direct supervision, which necessitates the veterinarian's presence on the campus, can lead to unnecessary delays in relieving an animal's suffering if a veterinarian is not immediately available. 'Indirect supervision' ensures that a veterinarian is available for consultation and has provided the necessary protocols but allows trained staff to act immediately to prevent prolonged distress. Additionally, while research institutions are required to have a licensed veterinarian, that veterinarian may not be a Maryland-licensed veterinarian. We request that read "under the indirect supervision of a licensed veterinarian". This change is vital to maintain the high standard of animal welfare the bill seeks to provide.

Section 15-105(A)(1) requires testing facilities to report the number of each species of animal owned and used. We are uncertain if this would apply to invertebrate animals, fish, flies, rats, etc.

As written, this requirement would be excessively burdensome, as it would necessitate the tracking and reporting of vast numbers of species. Given that the core of this section closely reflects SB0422, which focuses on the welfare and adoption of dogs and cats, we request that the reporting requirements in 15-105(A)(1) be narrowed to specifically “dogs and cats”. This ensures the state receives meaningful data on animals of the highest public concern without creating an unsustainable mandate for research and testing facilities. We further request that Section 15-105 be further amended to ensure conformity with our proposed amendments to SB0422, which are included below:

- We request the annual report prepared by the Secretary and posted on the Department’s website be required to anonymize any identifying information of the research or testing facilities.
- Additionally, to prevent a ‘back channel’ for obtaining this sensitive data, we request that identifying information of these institutions be exempt from disclosure under the Maryland Public Information Act.
- Require reporting by Fiscal Year, as opposed to January 31 annually, in order to align with already required USDA/APHIS reporting.

We believe these amendments provide technical clarity and professional flexibility necessary to achieve the bill’s intent while upholding the highest standards of veterinary medicine. We urge a favorable with amendments report on SB0423.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Legislative Committee Chair & Board Member
Maryland Veterinary Medical Association