



MARYLAND VOTES FOR ANIMALS

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March 10, 2026

To: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

From: Lisa Radov, President and Chair, Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc.

Re: Local Government – Trap - Neuter- Return Policies for Community Cats – Requirements and Restrictions (Ash's Law) – SB 750 – Favorable with the Professional Animal Workers of Maryland (PAWS) Amendment

Chair Feldman, Vice- Chair Kagan, members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Lisa Radov. I am the President and Chair of Maryland Votes for Animals. We champion humane legislation to improve the lives of animals in Maryland. Speaking for Maryland Votes for Animals, our Board of Directors, and our members across Maryland, I respectfully request that the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee vote favorably for Local Government – Trap - Neuter- Return Policies for Community Cats – Requirements and Restrictions (Ash's Law) – SB 750 – Favorable with the Professional Animal Workers of Maryland (PAWS) Amendment.

This bill ensures statewide consistency by preempting local ordinances that prohibit or restrict Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR), while still allowing reasonable regulations that protect public health and safety.

Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) is a humane, effective, and evidence-based method for stabilizing and reducing community cat populations. In a TNR program, community cats are humanely trapped using box or drop traps, transported to a veterinarian to be spayed or neutered and vaccinated, ear-tipped (the universal sign that a cat has been sterilized and vaccinated), and then returned to their outdoor home. TNR works because it addresses the root cause of overpopulation: uncontrolled breeding. Once sterilized, cats can no longer reproduce, and colony sizes naturally decline over time.

Why TNR Matters:

Population Stabilization and Long-Term Reduction

TNR immediately halts reproduction within a colony and gradually reduces its size, breaking the endless cycle of breeding that overwhelms shelters and communities.

Healthier Cats and Safer Communities

Sterilized cats are healthier, with lower risks of certain cancers and infections. They fight less, roam less, and are vaccinated against rabies and other diseases—improving public health and safety.

Fewer Nuisance Complaints

Neutered and spayed cats are quieter, spray less, and engage in fewer territorial disputes, reducing neighborhood disturbances.

Reduced Shelter Intake and Euthanasia

By preventing the birth of unwanted litters, TNR reduces the number of cats entering shelters—saving taxpayer dollars and reducing euthanasia.

Prevention of the “Vacuum Effect”

Attempts to remove or exterminate community cats are ineffective. When cats are removed, new unsterilized cats move in to access available resources, restarting the cycle. TNR prevents this by maintaining a stable, managed colony that deters new arrivals.

Natural Rodent Control

Managed cat colonies provide ongoing rodent control, benefiting neighborhoods and businesses.

In order to protect the safety of the TNR cats, we are requesting the following amendment to the bill regarding the return of the TNR cats: LINE 19 (4) UNLESS VETERINARY CARE IS REQUIRED OR THE AREA HAS BEEN DEEMED UNSAFE FOR RETURN. Adding this language would address concerns about situations where returning cats to the areas they came from would be detrimental to their health and safety where the location itself would be dangerous to return cats due to hazards or if there have been threats of harm to the animals from property owners in the area. While these situations are not the norm, they happen enough that this has been brought up as a concern for animal control officers and shelters. Without this caveat this bill could cause unintended consequences of a shelter being in violation of their responsibility to protect the health and safety of cat(s).

Trap-Neuter-Return is widely recognized as the most humane and effective approach to managing free-roaming cat populations. By focusing on prevention rather than removal, TNR protects public health, reduces costs, improves animal welfare, and creates lasting community stability. **This bill supports a practical, compassionate solution—one that benefits communities, shelters, taxpayers, and the cats themselves.**

In closing, I want to thank Senator Lewis Young for sponsoring SB 750 and for working on clarifying language that protects community cats. I respectfully ask the committee to issue a favorable report on SB 750 with the PAWS amendment.