



Maryland's Association of Animal Care and Control Agencies and Humane Societies
PO Box 1143
Easton, Maryland 21601

SB0750 Local Government - Trap-Neuter-Return Policies for Community Cats - Requirements and Restrictions (Ash's Law)

Maryland House of Delegates Environment and Transportation Committee

March 6, 2026

Dear Honorable Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and members of the committee:

Professional Animal Workers of Maryland, the state organization of animal control agencies and humane societies, supports SB0750 with one amendment and encourages a favorable and speedy report with the inclusion of this change.

Many shelters and animal control authorities across the state have been moving in the direction of Trap Neuter Return, whether having formal programs themselves or working behind the scenes with other organizations because there is not an authorized pathway for feral/community cat population management. Why? Because it works. We have learned that trapping and euthanizing otherwise healthy cats is inhumane, fiscally irresponsible and does not solve the problem. Cats will return to the area and continue to reproduce. Overwhelmingly, *healthy feline euthanasia* within Maryland animal shelters is comprised of feral/community cats from authorities that do not currently have a program nor work with other nonprofit organizations. One of the main reasons some agencies are not participating in these programs is the law does not explicitly give them permission to do so.

We request the addition of language we feel is imperative for our support of this bill which addresses the safety of the animals in question. There are those times where returning cats to the areas they came from would be detrimental to their health and safety. Whether it is that the location itself is dangerous or there have been threats of harm to the animals from property owners in the area. These situations are not the norm, but they do happen enough that this is a concern for officers and shelters alike. Without this caveat this bill could cause unintended consequences of a shelter being in violation to protect the health and safety of a cat(s). We ask the following addition to be considered: LINE 19 (4) UNLESS VETERINARY CARE IS REQUIRED **OR DEEMED INADVISABLE BECAUSE CONDITIONS IN THE ORIGINAL LOCATION POSE A DIRECT THREAT TO CATS' LIVES.**

Professional Animal Workers of Maryland adamantly oppose the language being requested by Maryland Association of Counties requiring a registry for citizens performing TNR in our communities. Unfortunately, we were not included in these discussions with MACO, who represents the counties and agencies requesting this addition. There is a great deal of ambiguity in the amendment without the Who, what, and why being defined.

Overwhelmingly our organization membership opposes the addition of a registry-as we understand it- due to our concerns of unintended consequences that will wholly usurp the intent of the bill; encouraging the community, agencies, and organizations to embrace and support TNR, remove the roadblocks to these programs and hold our citizens harmless for supporting these animals. By creating a registry as we are understanding their request, there will be citizens who will decide they are not going through this process, turning their backs on the problem. This is not conjecture, this is fact. Thus, leaving more cats unattended to, unaltered and unvaccinated, allowing the problems which we have worked on for years to curtail to rebound.

Additionally, there are some points to be addressed when we are discussing a registry:

- 1- How is the registry enforced?

- 2- Who will they register with? MDA? Local Animal Control? County or town offices?
- 3- What sort of registration are we speaking of?
 - a. An annual registration?
 - b. A one-time registration?
 - c. Will there be a fee?
- 4- What information are they asked to capture? Is this a list which each organization who facilitates TNR simply tracks or is this a registration form each person who works with TNR cats must complete?
- 5- Does the caregiver have an obligation to notify any other organization that they work with that they are registered before they can receive food, TNR services, other medical attention?
- 6- Are organizations (many of which are fully private and not under any government contract or agreement) now required to ensure these caregivers are registered?
- 7- Who will pay for the expense of registry creation, maintenance, and management?

Professional Animal Workers of Maryland WANTS this bill; however, we will be unable to support if a registry is included as it will create unintended consequences and undue burden on the caregivers and the organizations providing TNR services in Maryland.

This bill as written with the single inclusion of protection for the animals will codify the treatment of feral/community cats within Maryland not only permitting but requiring authorities across the state to continue their progress in the humane treatment of feral/community cats and a more humane Maryland overall. With this we ask for a favorable report with amendments on SB0750.

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