



Maryland Veterinary Medical Association (MDVMA)

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

HB0912 - Local Government - Trap-Neuter-Return Policies for Community Cats - Requirements and Restrictions (Ash's Law)

Committee: Environment and Transportation

February 23, 2026

MDVMA Position: SUPPORT

On behalf of the Maryland Veterinary Medical Association and its members, we urge a favorable vote on HB0912 Trap-Neuter-Return policies for community cats.

The following is important to consider when discussing this bill. Community cats are feral, semi-feral, and stray cats. These cats often live in independent, self-sustaining, outdoor colonies which do not belong to anyone. Colonies may have individuals or groups that monitor and feed them. Feral cats are unsocialized wild raised cats that are fearful of humans due to being unsocialized. Semi-feral cats are still fearful but may tolerate recognized caregivers. Both feral and semi-feral cats are unadoptable and can not be rehabilitated due to their lack of trust in humans. The solution to the community cat population is the establishment and protection of Trap - Neuter- Return.

Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) programs are the effective and humane practice of managing community cat populations. Through TNR cats are humanely trapped, given quality veterinary care, and returned to their colony OR adopting cats that are adoptable. The alternative management option is to trap and euthanize. Research has shown that robust TNR is more effective in stabilizing community cat populations, over trap and euthanize. While lethal management provides a short-term reduction in population, it leaves food and shelter behind which attracts new populations of unaltered cats to the area. Conversely, TNR provides sustained reduction in colony size by 66-80% over several years. Another benefit is the cost for management through TNR, is less as the work is done through volunteers. TNR is a better solution for the cats and the community. A supplemental list of the studies discussed have been provided.

HB0912 is vital for the protection of TNR programs as Maryland state law does not differentiate between the caretakers and the criminal act of abandoning a pet. Currently the abandonment of a domestic animal is misdemeanor. Due to the lack of differentiation, the care of these colonies is limited out of fear of persecution. Additionally, local ordinances restrict the feeding of colonies on specific properties, and subject community cats to impoundment, which ultimately leads to euthanasia. For these reasons, Maryland Veterinary Medical Association and its members, we urge a favorable vote on HB0912.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Legislative Committee Member & Director At Large
Maryland Veterinary Medical Association

MARYLAND VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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3. Hughes, Kathy L., Margaret R. Slater, and Linda Haller. “The Effects of Implementing a Feral Cat Spay/Neuter Program in a Florida County Animal Control Service.” *Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science* 5 (2002): 285–289.
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