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Bill: HB 666

Committee: House Environment and Transportation

Position: Favorable

Date: February 16, 2026

Dear Chairman Korman,

On behalf of our members and supporters, including those in Maryland, thank you for allowing our organization to provide comments on HB 666. Founded in 1883, the American Anti-Vivisection Society (AAVS) is the first non-profit animal advocacy and educational organization in the United States dedicated to ending the use of animals in science and we do so through education, advocacy, and the development of alternative methods. We also monitor the use of animals in science, including progress made in the field of alternatives. AAVS supports HB 666 because this legislation will spare the lives of dogs, cats, and other animals used in research and testing in Maryland, and it will advance the use of reliable, non-animal test methods.

There are problems with testing on animals. Approximately 90% of drugs tested on animals fail in human clinical trials. Science has come to understand the benefits of using advanced in vitro test methods based on human biology, which makes them more accurate predictors of human responses to drugs and chemicals. Cost and time savings also add value to non-animal methods.

Maryland became a leader in non-animal science when it established the Human-Relevant Research Fund in 2023. This groundbreaking law created a grant program for scientists in the state developing non-animal test methods. HB 666 ensures that such alternative methods are being used as soon as they are accepted by the appropriate regulatory agencies. AAVS also supports HB 666 because it would prohibit research and testing facilities from engaging in extreme practices that cause animal suffering.

Protecting Dogs and Cats, Ensuring Welfare, and Reducing Use in Research and Testing

HB 666 requires research and testing facilities in Maryland to ensure that the number of dogs and cats used in research or testing is reduced to the smallest number possible by using scientifically reliable and relevant methods that do not involve the use of dogs or cats. HB 666 also prohibits research and testing facilities from performing and using a dog or cat who has undergone a devocalization, a painful, unnecessary procedure, often done to limit noise from barking, not for the benefit or welfare of the animal.

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HB 666 also requires that dogs and cats used by research and testing facilities must be euthanized only by a lethal injection of sodium pentobarbital, administered either by a veterinarian licensed in Maryland or under the direct supervision of a veterinarian licensed in the state. Improper euthanasia can cause pain and unnecessary suffering.

Research and Testing Facilities Are Required to Use Non-Animal Test Methods

HB 666 has a common sense provision to save animals from unnecessary pain and suffering by prohibiting research and testing facilities from using a traditional animal test method if the agency responsible for regulating the specific product or activity for which a test method is used has: (1) approved a test method that does not use animals; or (2) granted a research or testing facility a waiver from using a traditional animal test method. Because non-animal methods are more applicable to human conditions, this will help to save both animal and human lives.

Requirement to Report the Use of Animals in Research and Testing

Increasing transparency, HB 666 requires research and testing facilities in Maryland to report information regarding animal use to the state Secretary of Agriculture, including numbers of each species of animals used and housed; numbers of dogs and cats released for adoption; and alternative methods used to replace animals tests. This data is vital in monitoring animal use in laboratories as it not only shows trends in what types of animals are used and whether their numbers are going up or down, but also the extent to which alternatives are being adopted by regulators and used by facilities. This latter point reinforces an important directive in the federal Animal Welfare Act that requires researchers to consider alternatives to painful procedures.

Conclusion

HB 666 represents a significant and humane step forward for Maryland. This bill will prevent unnecessary suffering and spare the lives of dogs, cats, and other animals, and it will advance the use of scientifically reliable and relevant non-animal test methods. AAVS supports HB 666.

Sincerely,

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