



Western Maryland K-9 Search and Rescue, Inc.

Quality • Focus • Teamwork

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February 11, 2026

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: SB 360 – Criminal Law – Emergency Response Animal – Prohibited Actions Against

Dear Chair Smith:

My name is Richard Smith. I am the Operational Team Leader for Western Maryland K-9 Search and Rescue. I am writing this letter in support with amendments of Senate Bill 360 regarding the crimes and penalties for various acts against both law enforcement and search and rescue animals.

On page 4, in line 5 of the bill I would like to ask you to consider adding horses to be used in Search and Rescue operations, matching those for Law Enforcement equine teams. There are two teams in Maryland that utilize equine resources when requested.

Thank you for your consideration of the matters addressed in your legislation to include search and rescue team animals. You may be aware, we are volunteer organizations. We purchase and maintain our own animals to include veterinary expenses. To train a dog from start to initial certification averages 18 to 36 months. Seminars and training are usually out of the handler's pocket as well as travel and lodging costs.

If I can provide any additional information, please feel free to contact me.

Richard C. Smith, Sr., M.S.
Team Leader
Western Maryland K-9 Search and Rescue
NASAR Canine Lead Evaluator - Trailing, Human Remains Detection – Land

cc: Members, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee