

Marymont Animal Hospital, Inc  
24 Randolph Road  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20904  
301-384-1223

Dear Senator Will Smith,

Cc: Senators Nick Charles, Jeff Waldstreicher, William Folden, Shaneka Henson, Mary Dulaney James, Sara Love, Michael McKay, Anthony Muse, Charles Sydnor and Christopher West

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Maryland House Bill 53, which proposes adding kangaroos, wallabies, wallaroos and zebras to Maryland's list of prohibited nondomesticated species.

While I understand that the intent of this legislation may be to promote public safety and animal welfare, I am concerned that a blanket prohibition fails to recognize the difference between irresponsible ownership and responsible, regulated animal care. Many individuals and professionals who keep macropods do so with extensive knowledge, proper facilities and veterinary oversight.

I have been a veterinarian in Maryland for almost 30 years and have worked with macropods for over 10 years – I see them in my practice and visit USDA educational facilities for macropod farm calls. I am also on the scientific board of the non-profit ECSM – The Education and Conservation Society of Macropodidae. What most people in this country are not aware of is the crisis these animals are currently experiencing in Australia – the government sanctions harvesting and culling of macropods in the most inhumane ways imaginable – as a result, there are several species that have gone extinct and several others that are threatened. Direct exposure to animals plays a critical role in conservation awareness. As a veterinarian working with macropods, I have seen firsthand how meaningful in-person encounters with animals inspire people to care about wildlife and conservation in ways that books or media alone cannot replicate.

All my macropod clients responsibly maintain these animals and do so with significant experience and dedication to their health and well-being. Of all the many species I work with (including cats, dogs, pocket pets, horses and ruminants), macropods are the most sensitive and gentle animals I have ever worked with. As we all can recognize, any animal that feels scared or threatened will try to protect itself, but macropods would rather run

than fight- they have a well-developed, immediate FLIGHT response! I see significantly more issues on a consistent basis with domestic dogs running rampant and attacking other animals and human beings.

I respectfully urge you to oppose House Bill 53 or consider amendments that allow for responsible, regulated care of macropod species in Maryland.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Alison Martini, DVM

Silver Spring, Maryland

Marymont Animal Hospital, Inc.

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