


F R O M	Name & Title	Dr. Letitia Dzirasa, Commissioner	Health Department	
	Agency Name & Address	Health Department 1001 E. Fayette Street Baltimore, Maryland 21201	AGENCY REPORT	
	Subject/ Position:	22-0131R – Informational Hearing - Animal Abuse Favorable		

To: President and Members
of the City Council
c/o 409 City Hall

February 22, 2023

The Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) is pleased to have the opportunity to review Council Bill 22-0131R, entitled “Informational Hearing – Animal Abuse.” This resolution invites representatives from the Baltimore Police Department, Baltimore City Health Department, the Office of Animal Control, Baltimore Animal Rescue and Care Shelter, the Department of Public Works, and the Department of Housing and Community Development to brief the City Council on the City’s current resources, protections, and capabilities to address and mitigate animal abuse, as well as the role and responsibilities of the Anti-Animal Abuse Advisory Commission.

The mission of Baltimore City’s Office of Animal Control is to “protect the human constituency from zoonotic diseases and the animal population from conditions of neglect, abuse and cruelty.” The Office, which operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, currently employs 13 Animal Enforcement Officers (AEOs). The Office is budgeted for 15, but there are two vacancies for which they are actively hiring. Collectively, these AEOs handle approximately 18,000 complaint calls per year. Investigations include animal bites, injured animals, neglect and cruelty to animals, and animal nuisances (e.g., barking, unsanitary conditions).

Of these 18,000 annual complaints, approximately 5,000 are in reference to an animal that is in danger, injured, abused, or neglected. When such calls occur, AEOs respond by initiating investigations. Actions include education and follow-up, seeking resources from BARCS Community Pet Program or Maryland Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (MDSPCA), rescue (removal) and impoundment, license suspension or revocation, and/or referral to BPD and SAO for criminal investigation and charging (approximately 100 cases per year).

For the reasons noted above, BCHD requests a **Favorable** position on Council Bill 22-0131R.