



October 17, 2014

President and Members of the City Council
409 City Hall
Baltimore, MD

Dear President and City Council Members:

The Baltimore Animal Rescue and Care Shelter, Inc (BARCS) supports changes made to Ordinance concerning Animal Control and Protection- Impoundment Reform, legislative file number 14-0442.

We feel reducing the amount of time an owner has to surrender the animal or provide proper information to the Office, from ten days to five days, is sufficient and reasonable for an owner to correct pending issues. A shelter environment exposes an animal to all kinds of conditions which can be stressful and may result in medical or behavioral issues. Decreasing the response time is also a cost cutting measure for expenses of extended care, treatment, and boarding. In addition, if a new owner is able to move the animal to a more suitable home environment quickly, then exposure of the animal can be decreased and the adjustment process can begin immediately. Furthermore, due to the high volume of animals the shelter receives daily, space is very limited at BARCS and holding animals for extended periods of time will often result in euthanasia of adoptable animals. Decreasing the time an animal is mandated to be held at the shelter will result in less cost and a healthier animal.

In addition, we also agree that if the Office reasonably believes the animal would be safer remaining in the shelter's care rather than being returned to the owner, that the shelter has the ability to hold the animal in foster care or another appropriate location that may be kept confidential. For the same reasons noted above, we feel this would be an appropriate course of action. By keeping the location confidential, we are providing protection for the animal as well as the caretaker.

Lastly, we also feel it is reasonable for the owner of an impounded animal to pay all costs for the care and other expenses incurred by the shelter within 72 hours of the commissioner's final decision. If the owner is not accountable for their actions, the burden of cost falls on the shelter which has very limited funding and resources for the 12,000 animals received annually. Requiring the owner to take responsibility for their actions is appropriate.

We thank you for your support of these changes and your continued support of BARCS.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Brause
Executive Director

301 Stockholm Street Baltimore, Maryland 21230
Phone: 410-396-4695 • Fax: 410-783-6266
www.baltimoreanimalshelter.org

