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	Agency Name & Address	Health Department 1001 E. Fayette Street Baltimore, Maryland 21201	MEMO	
	Subject	15-0558 – Animal Fighting Paraphernalia		

To: President and Members
of the City Council
409 City Hall

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The Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) is pleased to have the opportunity to review Council Bill 15-0558 – Animal Fighting Paraphernalia. The purpose of this bill is to prohibit the possession, sale, transfer, or manufacturing of animal fighting paraphernalia with the intent to engage in or otherwise promote or facilitate an animal fight. The bill makes a violation of the prohibition a misdemeanor and enables enforcement by both criminal and civil penalties. **BCHD supports this bill and encourages the Committee and the Council to report this bill favorably.**

Prohibiting the possession of animal fighting paraphernalia will help end animal fighting in Baltimore City. Animal fighting is not only cruel to animals but is associated with other illegal and often violent activity. Baltimore City Animal Control, in partnership with the Baltimore Police Department, has recently made significant progress in cracking down on animal fighting groups in Baltimore. This bill will support these efforts and closes a loophole in the current law.

Currently, the law does not provide adequate remedies if animal control and/or law enforcement enter a location used to promote animal fighting but find no animals present at the time. The overall condition of the property, including the possession of various forms of animal fighting paraphernalia, will establish that the location and the items found are used for animal fighting. These items include, but are not limited to, the following:

- *Rape stands* used to immobilize female dogs for breeding purposes;
- *Breaking sticks* designed for insertion behind the molars of a dog to break the dog's grip on another animal or object;
- *Cat mills* which rotate around a central support with one arm designed to secure a dog and one arm designed to secure a cat, rabbit, or other small animal beyond the grasp of the dog;
- *Springpoles* which have a biting surface attached to a stretchable device, suspended at a height sufficient to prevent an animal from reaching the biting surface while touching the ground;
- *Fighting pits* or other confined areas designed to contain an animal fight.

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