

F R O M	Name & Title	Olivia D. Farrow, Esq., RS Interim Commissioner of Health <i>OF</i>	Health Department MEMO	
	Agency Name & Address	Health Department 1001 E. Fayette Street		
	Subject	Council Bill 09-0322 – Leash Law – Environmental and Civil Citations		

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

April 21, 2009

The Baltimore City Health Department supports City Council Bill 09-0322. The purpose of the bill is to reduce the civil penalty for the animal control offense of failure to leash or restrain one's animal.

The Bureau of Animal Control's mission is twofold. It is not only responsible for protecting the human population from dangerous and vicious animals and zoonotic diseases, but it also tries to ensure that every animal within the City is treated humanely. Citations and fines are useful tools to deter activities and acts that conflict with the Bureau's mission.

For these reasons, during the 2008 legislative session, the Baltimore City health Department supported legislation to increase certain fines, specific to animal mistreatment, as a deterrent to the continuation of these illegal acts. It was not our intention, however, to advocate such dramatic increases in fines for those who violate non-animal cruelty related laws.

Council Bill 09-0322, by reducing the leash law fine from \$1,000 to \$250, will help address this unintentional increase in fines for minor offenses. Failure to leash one's animal is a minor offense in comparison to participating in a dogfight or beating and mistreating one's pet. Therefore, a violation of the leash law should not be equal to the animal abuse fine.

For the reasons stated above, BCHD supports bill 09-0322.

Cc: Angela Gibson

