



FROM	Name & Title	Oxiris Barbot, MD Commissioner 	Health Department MEMO	
	Agency Name & Address	Health Department 1001 E. Fayette Street Baltimore, Maryland 21201		
	Subject	Council Bill 13-0292 Animal Abuse – Reporting and Community Involvement		

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

December 19, 2013

The Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) is pleased to have the opportunity to review Council Bill 13-0292 Animal Abuse – Reporting and Community Involvement. The purpose of this bill is to allow reporting of animal abuse through the City’s 911 system as well as the 311 system; to correct a misnumbered statutory unit; expand the number of at-large members serving on the Mayor’s Anti-Animal Abuse Advisory Commission; clarify and conform related provisions; and generally relating to efforts to combat the abuse of animals.

This bill seeks to codify existing practice such that nonemergency animal service calls are properly routed to 311 and that 911 is reserved for emergent services only. While we agree with the premise of the bill, we believe that additional clarifying language is needed to ensure that 911 is used only in cases of real time, immediately life threatening animal abuse or an animal emergency where an animal is attacking a person or another animal. For this reason, we support the bill if amended to state: calls to 911 shall only be made when the complainant is witnessing an animal attacking a person or other animal, or in cases where the person witnesses real time, immediately life threatening abuse of an animal.

BCHD supports this bill with amendment because it ensures that the needs of City residents will be properly met in the most effective manner. We will attend the hearing to provide any additional information and answer any questions that the Council may have.

cc: Angela Gibson, Office of the Mayor
Valerie Rogers, Chief of Staff, Department of Health
Dr. Patrick Chaulk, Acting Deputy Commissioner, Department of Health
Amy Samman, Legislative Director, Department of Health

