


F R O M	Name & Title	Oxiris Barbot, MD Commissioner <i>Oxiris Barbot</i>	Health Department MEMO	
	Agency Name & Address	Health Department 1001 E. Fayette Street Baltimore, Maryland 21201		
	Subject	Council Bill 12-0106 – Animal Control and Protection Companion Animal Protection		

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

October 15, 2012

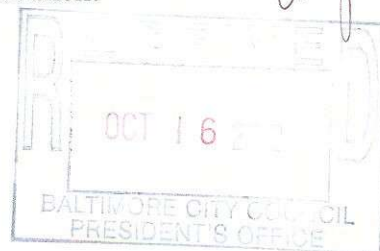
The Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) is pleased to have the opportunity to review Council Bill 12-0106 – Animal Control and Protection Companion Animal Protection. The purpose of this bill is to require animal shelters to take steps to reduce the number of animals they kill; repeal the requirement that cats be licensed; prohibit the immediate killing of animals when their owner's license is revoked; regulate the use of live animal traps to catch cats; establish standards for the operations of animal shelters; establish standards for the killing of animals in shelters; prohibit the use of animals from shelters for medical research; require that certain information about shelter operations be made available to the public; define and redefine certain terms; clarifying and conforming related provisions; provide for certain penalties; and generally relating to the treatment of animals commonly kept as companions.

While BCHD recognizes that the basic premise of this bill is to ensure Baltimore City's companion animals are protected, this bill has some substantial unintended consequences. The first is that it seeks to legislate activities of shelters that are not under our jurisdiction. Shelters are regularly inspected by state agencies to ensure proper licensure and that they are meeting sanitary requirements.

Additionally, the bill seeks to shelter animals that have behavioral and health issues. This would put both the shelter staff and the other animals at risk. Shelters simply do not have an area in which they can house sick, contagious animals away from the general population. This could potentially lead to infection of healthy animals. Likewise, housing dangerous animals could result serious injury to staff and/or otherwise healthy animals.

The cost burden to implement these changes would be exponential. It would require additional shelter space for the sick and dangerous animals as well as additional staff to handle the influx of animals that would result.

For the foregoing reasons, BCHD opposes this bill. BCHD and our partner BARCS will be present at the hearing to provide any additional information necessary to the Council.



cc: Angela Gibson, Office of the Mayor
Michelle Spencer, Chief of Staff, Department of Health
Dr. Patrick Chaulk, Acting Deputy Commissioner, Department of Health
Mary Beth Haller, Asst. Commissioner, Department of Health
Amy Samman, Legislative Director, Department of Health