

Department of Legislative Services  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 2018 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
 First Reader

House Bill 980 (Delegate A. Miller, *et al.*)  
 Environment and Transportation

**Task Force to Study the Feasibility of Establishing a Shelter Animal Refuge**

This bill establishes a Task Force to Study the Feasibility of Establishing a Shelter Animal Refuge. The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) must provide staff for the task force. The task force must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 31, 2018. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2018, and terminates May 31, 2019.**

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** General fund expenditures increase by \$15,200 in FY 2018 and \$56,600 in FY 2019. Revenues are not affected.

| (in dollars)   | FY 2018    | FY 2019    | FY 2020 | FY 2021 | FY 2022 |
|----------------|------------|------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Revenues       | \$0        | \$0        | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     |
| GF Expenditure | 15,200     | 56,600     | 0       | 0       | 0       |
| Net Effect     | (\$15,200) | (\$56,600) | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     |

*Note: ( ) = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease*

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

**Analysis**

**Bill Summary:** The task force must:

- study the annual population and save rates for cats and dogs, categorized on a statewide and regional basis, including the number (1) taken in by animal shelters;

- (2) adopted by individuals; (3) adopted by rescue organizations; (4) euthanized by animal shelters; and (5) euthanized by rescue organizations;
- analyze the costs of centralized animal refuges, the costs of regional animal refuges, and the differential between centralized and regional animal refuges, including (1) total costs; (2) land requirements; (3) structural requirements; (4) total capital costs; and (5) total operating costs;
  - identify mechanisms for funding the operational costs of both centralized and regional animal refuge programs;
  - identify other states, countries, and other jurisdictions that have established shelter animal refuges;
  - evaluate operating models for shelter animal refuges, including (1) the operational strengths and weaknesses of a refuge run by the State and (2) the operational strengths and weaknesses of a refuge run by a third-party contractor; and
  - make recommendations regarding the feasibility of establishing one or more shelter animal refuges in the State.

Task force members may not receive compensation but are entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the standard State travel regulations, as provided in the State budget.

**Current Law/Background:** Chapter 409 of 2017 requires animal shelters to follow minimum standards of care, adopted by MDA, for dogs and cats in animal shelters. Chapter 409 builds on Chapter 267 of 2016 which requires animal shelters to establish and make publicly available a written veterinary care protocol, a written protocol for reclaiming animals from the shelter, and an annual summary of intake and disposition data.

The Spay/Neuter Fund, established under Chapters 561 and 562 of 2013 and administered by MDA, has the purpose of reducing animal shelter overpopulation and cat and dog euthanasia rates by financing grants to local governments and animal welfare organizations for programs that most efficiently facilitate and promote the provision of spay and neuter services for cats and dogs in the State. The fund is supported by a fee imposed on each cat or dog food brand name or product name registered in the State.

**State Expenditures:** General fund expenditures increase by \$15,190 in fiscal 2018 and \$56,603 in fiscal 2019, which accounts for the bill's June 1, 2018 effective date and May 31, 2019 termination date. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring a full-time contractual employee and a part-time contractual administrative specialist to support the task force and the completion of the research and analysis for which the task force is responsible. Existing MDA staff cannot absorb these responsibilities. The estimate includes salaries, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses.

|                                 | <b>FY 2018</b>  | <b>FY 2019</b>  |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| New Contractual Positions       | 1.5             | 0.0             |
| Salaries and Fringe Benefits    | \$5,975         | \$55,872        |
| Operating Expenses              | <u>9,215</u>    | <u>731</u>      |
| <b>Total State Expenditures</b> | <b>\$15,190</b> | <b>\$56,603</b> |

This estimate does not include any health insurance costs that could be incurred for specified contractual employees under the State's implementation of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Any expense reimbursements for task force members are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** SB 700 (Senator Klausmeier, *et al.*) - Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland Department of Agriculture; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 16, 2018  
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Analysis by: Scott D. Kennedy

Direct Inquiries to:  
(410) 946-5510  
(301) 970-5510