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**BILL NO.:**           **HB 114**

**TITLE:**             Agriculture - Animal Shelters - Waiver of Adoption Fee

**SPONSOR:**        Delegate Long

**COMMITTEE:**     Environment and Transportation

**POSITION:**       **SUPPORT**

**DATE:**            February 12, 2020

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 114 – Agriculture - Animal Shelters - Waiver of Adoption Fee. This bill would waive the adoption fee for a dog or cat if the adopter is a veteran, serves as a first responder, or represents an organization that trains and provides service animals for persons with disabilities.

The positive effects that owning a domesticated pet have on individuals with intellectual, emotional or physical disabilities are well known. Pets provide unmatched companionship and support to their owners. By waiving adoption fees for veterans, first responders, and organizations who train emotional support animals, this bill would aid in providing unconditional love and support to those who need it the most at no added cost.

Currently, Baltimore County has free adoptions on Veterans’ Day and Memorial Day for veterans, and 50% adoption fees for veterans on all other days. This bill would not only further the County’s objective of providing more homes for the animals in our shelters, but would encourage service members to consider taking a step towards long term emotional, psychological, and physical health.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 114. For more information, please contact Chuck Conner, Chief Legislative Officer, at 443-900-6582.