

This is in opposition to Senate Bill 44, before the House Environment and Transportation Committee, as currently written.

The Chesapeake Siberian Husky Club, based in Point of Rocks, Maryland, is a 50 year old institution of dog enthusiasts who have been active in owning, showing and sledding our Siberian Husky dogs. I have testified before this Committee in 2018 and 2019 regarding predecessor versions of the Bill before you.

While I am grateful for the positive changes that have been made, including recognizing “sledding” as one of the exempted sporting activities, and modifying the criteria for what is defined as “suitable shelter” to be more practical, we remain concerned over the arbitrary use of 32 and 90 degrees to connote danger for all dogs, regardless of breed, age or condition. As I pointed out several years ago, our Siberians, with their arctic double fur and physiology are comfortable at 10 degrees above zero, while some breeds, such as hairless Chihuahuas would be in danger outside in temperatures of 45 degrees. Likewise, for Siberians at 80 degrees, if shade was inadequate or humidity is high. Common sense tells us that danger for a pet animal depends on the breed and condition of the dog, in question, and the weather conditions, not simply the temperature.

While an arbitrary temperature number is easier to enforce, that does not make it logical or scientifically sound.

We ask the Committee to reconsider SB 44 by retaining the weather alert provision (for extreme, dangerous cold or hot weather conditions), but dropping the arbitrary low and high temperature criteria. This would afford municipal authorities the leeway needed to make an informed judgment if and when an animal is at risk based on a variety of breed-related and environmentally related factors.

Thank you.

Joseph Fitzgerald

Jefferson, Maryland

Representing the Chesapeake Siberian Husky Club (Point of Rocks, Maryland)