



October 14, 2025

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

TO: Colette R. Gresham, Esq.
Acting Council Administrator

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THRU: Lavinia Baxter
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FROM: Alex Hirtle
Legislative Budget and Policy Analyst

Policy Analysis and Fiscal Impact Statement
CB-097-2025 Animal Control

CB-097-2025 (*proposed by*: Chair Burroughs)

Assigned to the Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy and Environment (TIEE) Committee

AN ACT CONCERNING ANIMAL CONTROL for the purpose of revising certain definitions; increasing certain civil penalties; expanding the leash law; expanding the type of dangerous animals; lifting a certain ban; providing for a pilot program to foster and adopt a certain specific dog breed; and generally regarding animal control in the County.

Fiscal Summary

Direct Impact:

Expenditures: Near-term probably neutral, potential significant long-term expenditures.

Revenues: Possible increased revenues foreseen.

Indirect Impact:

Potentially favorable

Legislative Summary:

CB-097-2025 was presented by Council Member Burroughs on October 7th, 2025 and referred to the Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy and Environment (TIEE) Committee. This bill provides fines for sections 3-136 and 3-137 of the County Code (Dangerous Animals) to be set at \$500 for the first violation, \$1,000 for the second violation, and \$3,000 for each subsequent violation.

It also amends the definitions of “Dangerous Animal” and “Potentially Dangerous Animal” by adding that declaration by another jurisdiction to either term (even under a different term name) shall establish validity of that term within Prince George’s County. It also provides for flexibility of the Administrator of the Animal Services Division (ASD) to waive Dangerous Animal prohibitions if it is determined that the animal is not a threat to public health or safety; flexibility also extends to the sale, release, or adoption of a dangerous or potentially dangerous animal. Other exceptions to this definition are added in Sec. 3-136.

It excludes an animal “at large” if the animal is utilizing an animal exercise area designated by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) or the Administrator, or in a securely fenced area with permission of the property owner. Common areas such as within an apartment complex, Home-Owners Association, or cooperatives are not considered owner’s premises.

The Bill limits leashes to ten (10) feet in length.

The legislation mandates that the County establish a pilot program regarding Pit Bull Terriers that provides for foster and adoption by ASD through special provisions including applying for a permit, complying with all requirements in Subsection 4, microchip and spay/neuter requirements by ASD. Residents of the County owning Pit Bull Terriers may harbor the animal under certain conditions, including a permit with signed agreement, proof of rabies vaccination and microchip, and complete a pet parenting class offered by ASD, and notify the Division when the animal escapes or ceases to be in the owner’s custody, attacked or bitten another animal or human, owner has changed address, or ownership has changed. ASD will be permitted to contact the owner at reasonable times, upon notice and reasonable manner to inspect the dog and its premises. Violation of these conditions may result in the permit being revoked and other criminal/administrative penalties. ASD will collect, maintain, and review data from this program and report its findings to the County Council on a bimonthly basis.

Current Law/Background:

CB-097-2025 amends Subtitle 3, Animal Control, Sections 3-101, 3-116, 3-135, 3-136, and 3-185.01 of the Prince George’s County Code.

The County has generally prohibited Pit Bull Terriers and similar breeds from being owned, kept, or harbored within the County through legislation in 1996.¹ This ban has been controversial with some elected officials as well as animal groups; in 2019, County legislation was proposed to repeal the ban.² In March 2023, the County stopped enforcement of the breed ban due to a federal lawsuit filed by a resident of the County seeking to overturn the ban.³

Resource Personnel:

- Kathy Canning, Legislative Attorney
 - Preston J. Ross, Chief of Staff (District 8)
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Discussion/Policy Analysis:

The legislation is intended to update the County's Animal Code in reference to dangerous, potentially dangerous, and Terrier Pit Bull (and similar breeds) restrictions. The Bill essentially creates a trial run pathway for residents to own pit bulls or bully breed dogs in our County.

Animal Services Division has noted in the County Agency Legislative Comment Request Form that if they are to be required to offer and mandate training for the owners of an estimated 20,000 to 25,000 bully breeds in our jurisdiction, this would be a significant hardship, and would take years to accomplish. It is unclear how such a program would be initiated, facilitated, sustained (either financially or human resource-wise given the already difficulty ASD has in hiring and retaining animal service employees). The Division noted that online training would lighten the burden, but verification would be an issue.

There is also the political/public controversy of this legislation. Despite the (technical) ban of Pit Bull Terriers and similar breeds being sustained in the court system, empirical data indicates that these breed of dogs have still been a nuisance in some communities, including fatal attacks on other animals.⁴ However, data has indicated that a study in 2019 indicated that pit bulls were over-presented in fatal or severe dog attacks, with only 22.5% of all dog bites coming from this breed.⁵ Either way, the Council can expect to have ample feedback on this legislation from the public and special interest groups.

The text of the legislation and the Code text may need to be amended to reflect the intended designations within the Animal Services Division: for example, page 9, line 17 uses the term "Animal Control", but refers to "animal protection" in the next line (18) for noted occurrences.

¹ CB-106-1996

² <https://www.humanerescuealliance.org/blog/posts/renewing-the-fight-for-prince-georges-pit-bulls>

³ <https://wtop.com/prince-georges-county/2023/03/court-filings-show-prince-georges-co-stopped-enforcing-its-pit-bull-ban/>

⁴ Prince George's County Commission For Animal Control, June 11, 2025 Hearing Docket, No. 189-24 VA

⁵ <https://www.weinbergglawoffices.com/what-percentage-of-dog-attacks-are-pit-bulls/>

The Department of the Environment webpage does not clarify the difference between “Animal Control”, “Animal Services Division”, and does not specify “animal protection”. Additional clarity in the text (both in the legislation and on the webpage) would help residents in knowing the correct division or section to call.⁶

Fiscal Impact:

- *Direct Impact*

Enactment of CB-097-2025 according to the Animal Services Division will have no immediate fiscal impact. However, if the Division was required to offer and mandate training to all county bully breeds, the financial and staffing resources would be significant, and could take years to accomplish. Online training would lighten the burden. Revenues may increase over the long-term due to increased fine amounts.

- *Indirect Impact*

Enactment of CB-097-2025 should have a favorable indirect impact on the County by ensuring increased safety and additional regulation on dangerous and potentially dangerous animals. Mandated dog training for bully breeds could lead to a decrease in attacks by dogs to both humans and other animals.

- *Appropriated in the Current Fiscal Year Budget*

No.

Effective Date of Proposed Legislation:

The proposed Bill shall be effective forty-five (45) calendar days after it becomes law.

If you require additional information, or have questions about this fiscal impact statement, please reach out to me via phone or email.

⁶ <https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/departments-offices/environment/animal-services/animal-control>