

THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Department of the Environment



October 6, 2025

TO: The Honorable Eric Olson, TIEE Chair

Prince George's County Council

FROM: Samuel B. Moki, Ph.D., Acting Direct

Department of the Environment

RE: Animal Services Division - Comments on CB-081-2025

The Department of the Environment, Animal Services Division (ASD), welcomes the intent behind County Bill (CB) 081-2025 and appreciates the County Council's commitment to enhancing animal welfare services through dedicated community engagement.

We recognize that the goal of CB-081-2025 is to create an active advisory structure. However, ASD would like to collaboratively explore leveraging the existing Commission for Animal Control (ACC), as established in Subtitle 3, Division 3 - Commission for Animal Control.

We are concerned that establishing a new committee might create structural redundancy, given the significant overlap between the proposed responsibilities and the ACC's existing mandate (Sec. 3-109). We believe a more immediate and effective path to achieving the bill's goals lies in strategically filling the current vacancies within the ACC, which is currently operating with a 50% deficit in public members. Fully staffing the existing ACC would empower it to immediately begin providing the intended expert feedback and collaboration.

As a point of clarification regarding regulatory jurisdiction, we note that the primary authority for broad wildlife management in Maryland rests with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MD-DNR). The County's Animal Services Division's role is focused on responding to domestic animals, as well as wildlife that is sick, injured, or posing a direct public safety threat.

We fully support the bill's overarching goal of establishing an expert group to assist ASD in improving services for the County's animals and residents. Promoting a collaborative process where the group would be advising, working with, and establishing best practices in concert with ASD-rather than risking the creation of an oversight commission that could lead to acrimony, to the detriment of animal welfare.

We propose the following specific, collaborative amendments to key sections of the bill:

| Section | Current Verbiage | Recommended Amendment |
|-----------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Sec. 2- | "Serve as the central point of | "Work with the Animal |
| 553(a)(1) | information for the animal | Services Division to serve as |
| | welfare community regarding | a key resources hub for |
| | governmental, non-profit and | information for the animal |
| | private programs affecting | welfare community regarding |
| | animal welfare." | governmental, non-profit and |
| | | private programs affecting |
| | | animal welfare." |
| Sec. 2- | "Advise the County Executive and | "Advise the County Executive |
| 553(a)(3) | County Council on best practices | and County Council on what |
| | for animal shelters and for | organizations are leading |

| | recruiting volunteers for the | development of best practices |
|------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | County animal shelter." | for animal shelters |
| | County animal Sherter. | nationwide. Identify and |
| | | = |
| | | explain what best practices |
| | | in shelter medicine should or |
| | | shouldn't be recommended for |
| | | use in Prince George's |
| | | County. Identify any |
| | | successful best practices |
| | | implemented that are |
| | | successful by national |
| | | metrics. Review current |
| | | practices for recruiting and |
| | | training volunteers for the |
| | | County animal shelter and |
| | | make recommendations for |
| | | improvements." |
| Sec. 2- | "Work to establish better | "Serve as a facilitator of |
| | | communication and |
| 553(a)(6) | communication and understanding | |
| | between the animal welfare | understanding between the |
| | community, the County government | animal welfare community, the |
| | and community at large." | County government and |
| | | community at large." |
| Sec. 2-555 | "The committee shall meet in | "The committee shall meet in |
| | public session on call of the | public session on call of the |
| | Chair. The Committee must meet | Chair. Appropriate notice |
| | as often as necessary to perform | must be given to the |
| | and exercise its duties, but not | community per the State of |
| | less than 6 times each year. The | Maryland's Open Meetings Act |
| | public meetings may be held in | and county public meeting |
| | person or virtually." | quidelines. The Committee |
| | <u> </u> | must meet as often as |
| | | necessary to perform and |
| | | exercise its duties, but not |
| | | less than 6 prescheduled |
| | | times each year. The public |
| | | meetings may be held in |
| | | person or virtually. The |
| | | Chair will conduct these |
| | | |
| | | meetings in an atmosphere of |
| | | collaboration with committee |
| | | members and the public." |

To ensure the committee's leadership has a deep understanding of and commitment to our unique community, ASD recommends that the legislation should stipulate that the Chair and Vice Chair of the committee must be residents of Prince George's County, Maryland. This requirement ensures that the leadership possesses a vested interest in local outcomes and is directly familiar with the County's diverse culture and urban demographics.

ASD looks forward to continued dialogue with the County Council to implement the best possible structure for supporting the animals and residents of Prince George's County. Should you have any questions regarding these comments or recommendations, please contact me at (301) 883-5812.

Attachments

cc: Derrick L. Coley, Deputy Director, DoE
David L. Fisher, Associate Director, ASD, DoE
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