



Aisha N. Braveboy
County Executive

THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Department of the Environment



Samuel B. Moki, Ph.D.
Acting Director

October 6, 2025

TO: The Honorable Eric Olson, TIEE Chair
Prince George's County Council

FROM: Samuel B. Moki, Ph.D., Acting Director
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. 2-553(a) (1)	"Serve as the central point of information for the animal welfare community regarding governmental, non-profit and private programs affecting animal welfare."	"Work with the Animal Services Division to serve as a key resources hub for information for the animal welfare community regarding governmental, non-profit and private programs affecting animal welfare."
Sec. 2-553(a) (3)	"Advise the County Executive and County Council on best practices for animal shelters and for	"Advise the County Executive and County Council on what organizations are leading

	recruiting volunteers for the County animal shelter."	development of best practices for animal shelters 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. 2-553 (a) (6)	"Work to establish better communication and understanding between the animal welfare community, the County government and community at large."	"Serve as a facilitator of communication and understanding between the animal welfare community, the County government and community at large."
Sec. 2-555	"The committee shall meet in public session on call of the Chair. The Committee must meet as often as necessary to perform and exercise its duties, but not less than 6 times each year. The public meetings may be held in person or virtually."	"The committee shall meet in public session on call of the Chair. Appropriate notice must be given to the community per the State of Maryland's Open Meetings Act and county public meeting guidelines. The Committee 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
Terri Littlejohn, Deputy Associate Director, ASD, DoE
Dana Cooper, Manager, DoE Boards & Commissions, DoE