



October 7, 2025

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

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

Karen T. Zavakos, Esq.
Acting Deputy Council Administrator

THRU: Lavinia Baxter 
Senior Budget and Policy Analysis

FROM: Alex Hirtle 
Legislative Budget and Policy Analyst

RE: Policy Analysis and Fiscal Impact Statement
CB-081-2025 Animal Welfare Advisory Committee

CB-081-2025 (*proposed by: Councilmember Watson*)

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

AN ACT CONCERNING PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE for the purpose of creating the Prince George's County Animal Welfare Advisory Committee; providing for the powers and duties of the Committee; providing for the Committee composition, terms and officers; providing for meetings; providing for the Committee's advice and annual report; and generally regarding animal welfare in the County.

Fiscal Summary

Direct Impact:

Expenditures: Probably negligible to modest expenditures.

Revenues: No foreseen revenues.

Indirect Impact:

Potentially favorable.

Legislative Summary:

CB-081-2025 was presented on September 16th 2025 and referred to the Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy and Environment Committee (TIEE). This bill creates the Prince George's County Animal Welfare Advisory Committee to promote and enhance the welfare of animals and serve as a link between the animal welfare community and local government. It provides for the powers and duties of the Committee, including advising the County Executive and County Council on issues such as animal fostering, control of the animal population, and best practices for animal shelters; the Committee composition, which includes nine members consisting of a licensed veterinarian, a shelter volunteer, a member representing an organization servicing feral cats, and a member experienced in animal or pet behavior, among others; terms and officers, meetings; and the Committee's advice and annual report, which shall be provided to the Council and County Executive by July 1st of each year.

Current Law/Background:

This legislation adds language to Subtitle 2, Sec. 2-552 through Sec. 2-556 of the County Code. It seeks to include another entity to assist and advise the County's leadership on issues of and related to animal control and the operation of the Animal Shelter. The proposed legislation, in part, seeks to meet several challenges that the Animal Services Division (ASD), under the Department of the Environment (DoE), has persisted with, including Shelter diseases and overcrowding, volunteer dissatisfaction and high turnover, chronic staffing shortages, and operational programs and procedures overseen by ASD.

The County currently has the Commission for Animal Control (ACC), as established in Subtitle 3, Division 3 – Commission for Animal Control. This entity's duties include recommending to the County Executive and DoE Director operation advisement of Animal Services and the Adoption Center, recommendations on the budget of the Animal Control program, recommendations on standards and operations of Animal Services and the Adoption Center, and conducting public hearings of Animal Control violations, and taking appropriate affirmative action.

Resource Personnel:

- Kathy Canning, Drafter
 - Jobina Brown, Director of Policy & Communications, District 4
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Discussion/Policy Analysis:

The legislation's text states that the "...Animal Welfare Advisory Committee is hereby created to promote and enhance the welfare of animals and serve as a link between the animal welfare community and local government."¹ Given the challenges the ASD has seen in the past few years, including Shelter overcrowding, multiple zoonotic disease outbreaks, fiscal challenges, volunteer dissatisfaction and high-turnover, staff shortages², and the delay in a North County animal shelter for over 10 years, this Bill seeks to bring additional stakeholders into an advisory capacity and inform the Council and County Executive of possible solutions.

Many of the issues that the County's ASD have been dealing with are not unique to our jurisdiction: overcrowding at animal shelters has been highly documented nation-wide with shelters gaining about 250K additional animals in 2023.³ Additionally, many shelters have had concerns with developing effective adoption and foster programs, have experienced disease outbreaks in their shelters, and have had funding challenges. Several jurisdiction in the region have seen the benefits of establishing an animal advisory board: Montgomery County created their Animal Services Advisory Committee in 2021⁴ and have developed several sub-committees to deal with challenges such as shelter operations, community outreach, adoption and foster programs, staff and volunteer issues, and partnering with outside organization to fulfill the mission of the Office of Animal Services. It should be noted that Montgomery County has an Animal Matters Hearing Board, an entity totally separate from their animal advisory committee.⁵ Baltimore County has its own Animal Services Advisory Committee, and Calvert County also has an Animal Shelter Advisory Board.

A recent letter dated October 6th from the Director of DoE to the TIEE Chair (Eric Olson) stated that the Department opposed CB-081-2025 due to the creation of "...structural redundancy..." and "...overlap in responsibilities..." with the Animal Control Commission (ACC), an advisory board that makes recommendations to the County Executive and DoE Director on ASD and the Shelter. This commission also conducts public hearings on a regular basis regarding animal control violations, and takes appropriate affirmative action. The Commission's webpage has its public hearings with agendas posted, but provides no information on recommendations it has shared with any other entity. Furthermore, an extensive search in the County Council's Legislative Information Service (LIS) page from 2020 to present only indicates several appointments for the Commission, but no briefings, presentations, or advisory functions to the Council. CB-081-2025 specifically provides accountability for the proposed Advisory Committee by requiring the group to meet at least six times a year, and provide an annual report to the Council and County Executive. In accordance with County Code Subtitle 3, Division 3, which created the ACC, mandates are obscure, and information is not readily being shared with the public; additionally, there are some questions regarding what the Director has placed in the letter as "current verbiage" in the Code.

¹ CB-081-2025 text, DR-1, page 1, lines 19-21.

² Issues were garnished from Budget Discussions with DoE in March 2025 and FY26 DoE Budget Report, page 25.

³ <https://www.shelteranimalscount.org/americas-animal-shelters-are-overcrowded-with-pets-from-families-facing-economic-and-housing-woes/>

⁴ Montgomery County Council Bill 37-21.

⁵ <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/animalservices/oas/board.html>

Finally, the letter notes that there are current vacancies in the ACC at a “50% deficit in public members”. Given this, it is questionable how effective this commission has been with its membership so severely lacking.

- *Direct Impact*

Enactment of CB-081-2025 will probably have a negligible to modest negative direct fiscal impact on the County in the form additional expenditures due to the increased staff workload for supporting the Advisory Committee, as well as materials and possible expense reimbursements for members. The legislation provides no mention of a stipend for members. Passage of the Bill provides no foreseen revenue for the County.

- *Indirect Impact*

Enactment of CB-081-2025 could have a favorable indirect impact on the County by increasing the effectiveness of operations at ASD, thus reducing expenses, and increasing live rate release percentages for the Division. If the Advisory Committee is an effective entity and fosters partnerships with other organizations and corporations, there could be additional grants and money-in-kind directed towards ASD. Additionally, more effective management and administration of volunteers and staff could reduce turnover rates and increase job satisfaction of those two parties.

- *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.